

Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences; Journey to Success

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Scientific journals were introduced in the 17th century with the French Journal des Savants and the British Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society¹. General medical journals began at the end of the 18th century and specialist medical journals at the beginning of the 20th century. Since then, there has been exponential growth of the medical journals focusing on the specialties and subspecialties. Medical journals have always been about more than publishing science aiming for education, entertainment, campaign, exchange of ideas, innovations and providing a forum for medical communities to debate issues in depth.

Recognizing the fundamental importance of research-based publications in the medical sphere, the concept of Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences was conceived in early 2006 and its first publication came out of the press in December 2006. This is a university-based, bi-annual, bilingual, peer-reviewed publication under the patronage of the Research Deanery of Taibah University. The entire publication process is strongly supported by the President His Excellency Prof. Mansour Nozha, as well as Vice Rector for Research, Taibah University Almadinah Almunawwarah who furnished unprecedented and uninterrupted help to the Journal. Since then, the Journal has steadily flourished by publishing research-based articles with consistency while adher-

ing to high standards of quality peer review (**Figure 1**). During the 2006-2011 tenure, the Journal received 191 submissions, accepted 90 articles after peer review (acceptance rate being 47.1%). The publications in the Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences covered all disciplines of medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, and allied medical sciences encompassing versatile categories of articles (**Figure 2**). There has been substantial contribution by the academic staff of the universities seconded by the non-teaching health-care professionals and undergraduate medical students (**Figure 3**). The academic staff authoring the publications in the Journal represented almost all established universities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia along with other regional universities (**Figure 4**). The Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences is indexed with the Index Copernicus, Index Medicus under WHO, EMBASE, and recently finalized agreement with Elsevier Science Direct Publisher for the online publications. The first issue with Elsevier Science Direct (Volume 7 Issue 1) is planned to be published in June 2012 insha Allah. The Journal endeavors to get the indexation with the Medline and there is initial success with potential promise for indexing the Journal during the current year. The Journal has a well-designed website www.jtaibahunimedsc.net where aims and

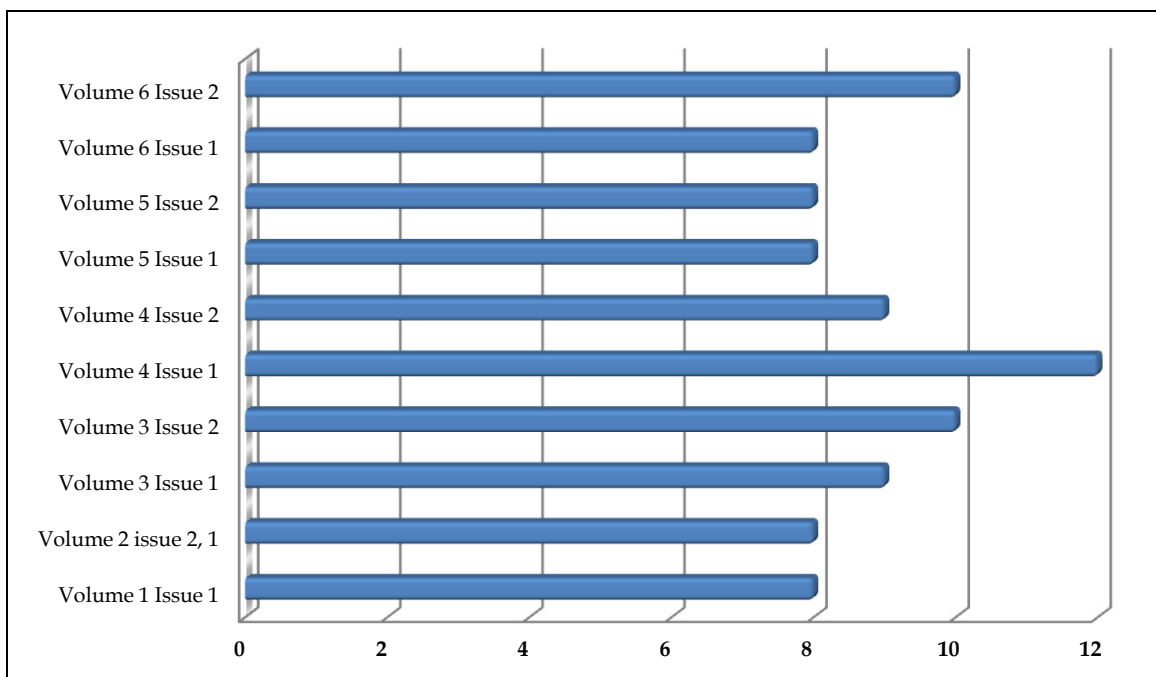


Figure 1: The number of publications per issue starting 2006 until 2011.

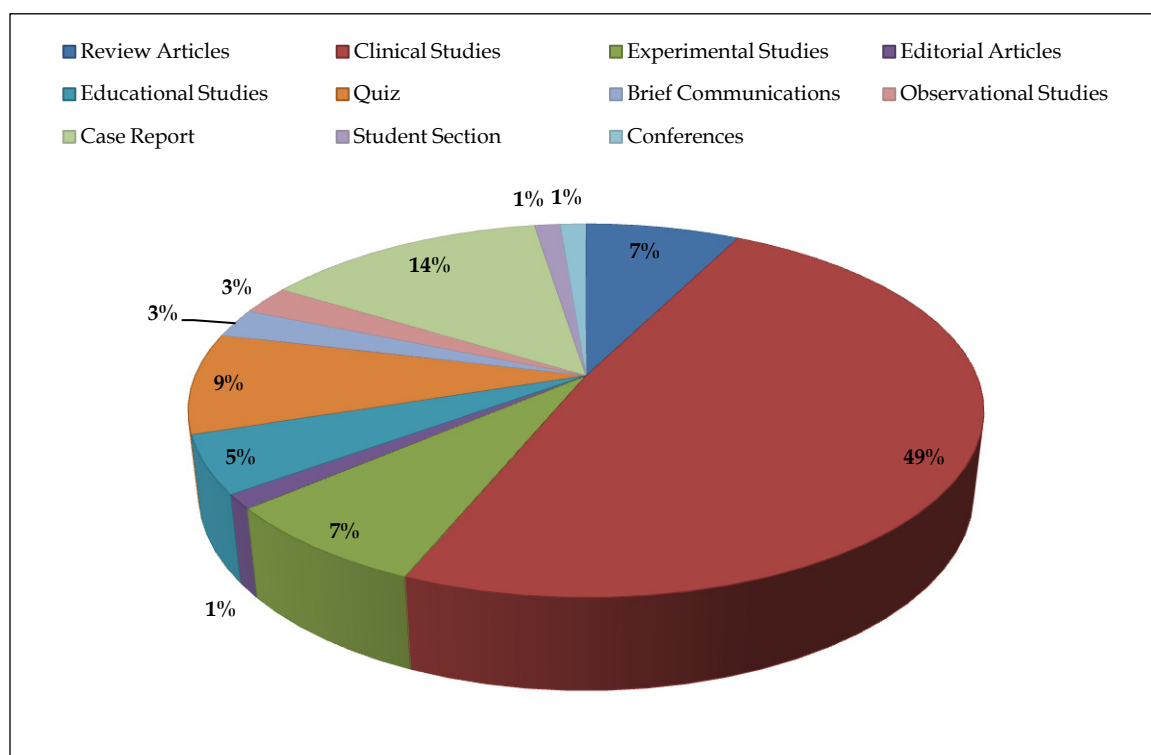


Figure 2: The categories of the published articles in the Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences.

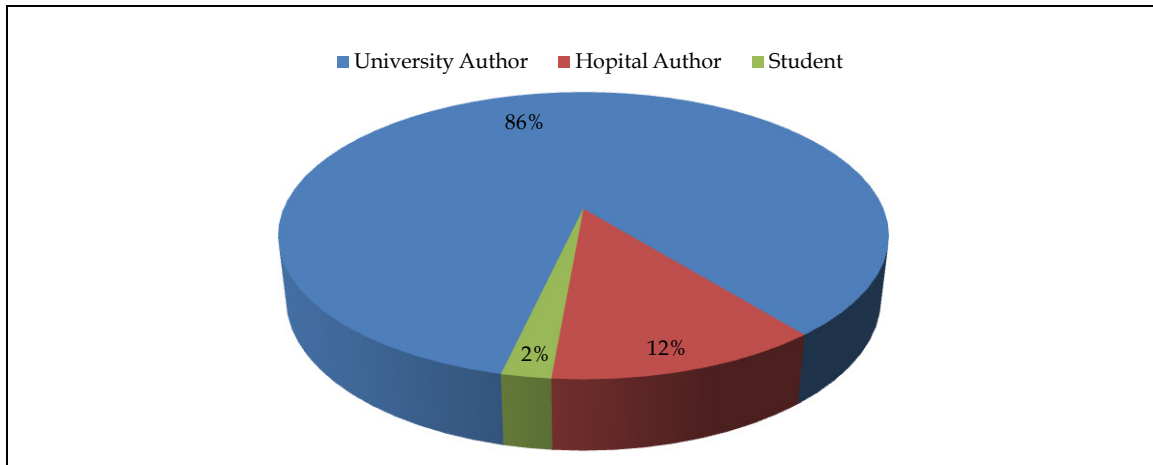


Figure 3: Scientific contributions by the academic staff and others.

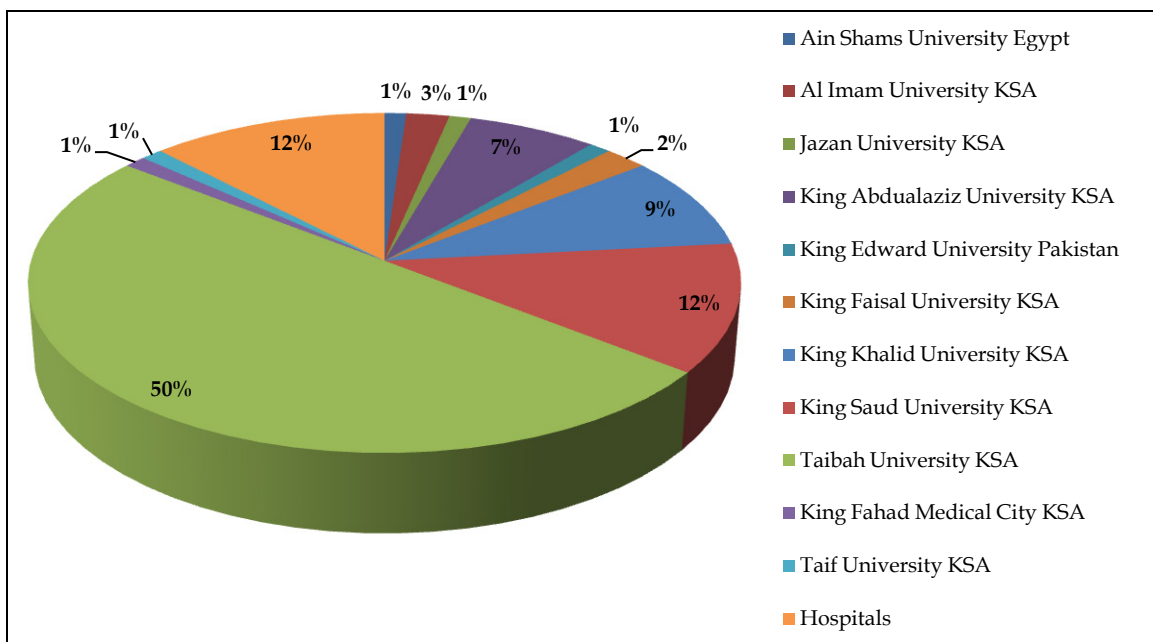


Figure 4: Proportion of scientific contributions by the universities.

scope of the Journal, instructions to the authors, online submission, and archiving for the current and previous issues can be easily performed.

During the early phase, there have been major challenges to the editorial teams (Editors, Editorial Board Members, Advisory Board and Editorial Assistants) of the journal; to maintain continuous inflow of quality articles for the first few issues before the journal was well-established, database of the authors and reviewers,

mentoring and monitoring the peer reviewers, presenting the journal to the medical sphere, desktop publishing, printing, surface and on-line posting, and managing the short term and long term development of the Journal. All these daunting tasks were appropriately achieved and materialized due to untiring efforts of the Journal team. This will not go without saying the technical role of the publisher, Maktaba Darussalam Riyadh, which

provided quality publications on a 4-color acid-free paper.

The Journal team has played a leading role in mediating disputes between authors, peer reviewers, readers, as they are responsible for applying and sometimes enforcing ethical principles of research and publication. They often had to perform as de facto educators in the process of communicating with the authors about their manuscripts, both accepted and rejected. When required, the team had to exert important influences on authors and researchers early in their careers through mentoring, appointing peer reviewers, and inviting authors to write review and editorial articles. Recently, the Journal has launched a Student Section solely devoted for generating research-based mentoring of the undergraduate medical students which will groom them in becoming researchers and writers at an early stage of their career. The Medical journals reflect a confluence of medicine, science and journalism—and might be expected to have the values of all three. To achieve an acceptable share from all the three values, the medical editors should possess appropriate mastery of research and the modes of presentations of scientific research, research and publications ethics, and the copyright issues. Each journal defines its style and format, but most follow basic guidelines for publishing biomedical research².

The Journal follows the guidelines laid out by the Committee for Publications Ethics (COPE) which is a forum for promoting integrity in research publications³. COPE aims to define best practice in the ethics of scholarly publishing and assists editors, editorial board members, owners of journals and publishers to achieve these novel landmarks. In line with the recommendations of COPE, the Journal has adapted the policy to screen all submissions for plagiarism which is becoming increasingly common in the recent past. Plagiarism is the wrongful presentation of somebody else's work or idea as one's own without adequately attributing it to the source⁴.

Editors need to know how medical journals operate in both scientific and economic perspectives. There has been profound financial support by the Research Deanery of Taibah University to the Journal which not only generously funds the Journal but also offers 500 Saudi Riyals to each reviewer. So the economic issue of the Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences has been very well taken care of.

The future vision for the Journal is to increase its frequency, dissemination, publications from more internationally renowned researchers with an intention to establishing a forum for the dissemination of scholarly research.

References

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3. Committee for Publications Ethics (COPE) April 2011.
4. Guidelines for avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and questionable writing practices. <http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/plagiarism/14.shtm>